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Thirty-six public school teachers and administrators completed an intensive 8-week summer institute held at Eastern Michigan University in 1966 to develop greater competencies in educational research and evaluative efforts on the local school level. The program included course work in statistics, design and utilization of behavioral science evaluation instruments, and research design. With the assistance of staff consultants, trainees designed research projects intended to make significant contributions to education in general and to their school systems in particular. In addition, visiting lecturers presented programs on sampling, interviewing, computer utilization, interaction analysis, Title I evaluation, nongraded programs, and state department programs. Evaluation of the institute by both participants and staff using rating forms and questionnaires as well as unstructured devices, indicates success in terms of work completed and objectives attained. The program's primary strength was producing a genuine appreciation and understanding of the nature of research evidence. A weakness, however, was its overemphasis on theory; seminars on applied techniques relevant to individual projects might have been more practical. Future institutes would benefit too from more adequate lead-time for publicity for briefing of administrators, and for selection of applicants who have interest and competence in basic research activity. (JS)

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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH TRAINING INSTITUTE

FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL PERSONNEL

Grant No. OEG-3-6-062394-1283

Dr. Robert L. Anderson, Director

June 27, 1966 to August 19, 1966

The training program reported herein was conducted pursuant to a grant from the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Grantees undertaking such projects under Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgment of the conduct of the project. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Office of Education position or policy.

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Ypsilanti, Michigan

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November 15, 1966

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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Orientation of Program

This training program was an intensive eight-week summer institute in educational research training for public school personnel in the southeastern section of Michigan. The inclusive dates of the institute were June 27, 1966 through August 19, 1966. Thirty-six elementary and secondary teachers and administrators completed the institute designed to develop greater competencies in research/evaluative efforts. The specific objectives of the program included:

1. To provide basic skills in the use of statistics, research design, and research evaluation.

2. To aid the participant in designing research and evaluation components for his local school in order to meet the immediate needs.

3. To stimulate interest in educational research as an essential component of the instructional program.

4. To improve the quality and expertise of those individuals presently responsible for conducting research programs in the local school system.

5. To enable selected professionals to continue their own growth and development in their respective area of educational expertise.

6. To create opportunities for professionals to refine their research projects under directed supervision in order to develop increased sophistication in research methods.

7. To develop new insights into research methods and design that will be useful in critically examining programs growing out of federal and state legislation.

8. To obtain a better understanding of the relative effectiveness of the training methods used in this institute for purposes of increasing the effectiveness of future training.

Description of the Program

The course content of the program included statistics in psychology and education, research design, design and utilization of behavioral science and education evaluation instruments, and individual research design and development. The courses in statistics and evaluation instruments were sectioned to accommodate individual differences in the proficiencies demonstrated by participants on a screening test. This was intended to permit a more homogeneous

grouping and a differential treatment of content. Each section met four times per week for eight weeks. The design class met five hours per week for eight weeks. Thus, participants attended classes from 8 A.M. to 11:45 A.M. daily. The afternoons (1 P.M. to 4 P.M.) were occupied by general session with visiting lecturers, individual consultation with instructors on research projects, and assistance with classwork problems. Visiting lecturers presented programs on sampling, interviewing, computer utilization, interaction analysis, Title I evaluation, non-graded programs, and state department programs.

Two changes were made in the staff allocation for the institute after the proposal was approved. Dr. Wilbur Williams replaced Dr. Kenneth Morse. Since Dr. Williams has specialized in evaluation instruments, he took over the responsibility for the course. Drs. Anderson and Brower shared the responsibility for the courses in research design and the design and development of the individual research projects.

Evaluation of the Program

1. Program Factors

a. The objectives of the program as evaluated by staff and participants indicate little need for change. This will be reflected in the report of the participant's evaluation of the program. I would especially emphasize objectives 2, 4, 6, and 7 in the original proposal.

b. The content of the program while adequate for the program presented would be significantly modified in a future proposal. The program emphasis would center on the development of a research project. Instead of discrete course offerings in statistics and measuring devices, seminars emphasizing applied techniques would be included as they are relevant to the research proposal development. This would require a significant readjustment in program, staff, assignments, and trainee characteristics.

The projected program would concentrate attention upon specific research problems pre-selected by the trainees. Each trainee would be assigned to a staff member competent to guide the project development. In addition, trainees would have specific courses in contemporary research literature from education and the behavioral sciences and in research design and methodology. Seminars, consultants, and field trips would be geared to the needs of the trainees to prepare them to develop and carry-out the project designed.

c. Staff ratio and competence were very adequate for the current program. The scheduling of consultants was not as timely as would be desired because the readiness of trainees and the availability of consultants did not coincide as often as desirable.

In future programs it is intended that much more structuring of program, progress deadlines, and supervized proposal development will be included. This should insure better utilization of staff time and trainee progress.

d. Trainee progress appears to be directly related to trainee background, interest, and personal competence. While the general selection criteria were adequate, it is to be hoped that future programs will improve on the overall quality of trainees.

Specifically, trainees will be expected to evidence both interest and competence in research skills by having completed at least one course in statistics and one course in evaluation instruments. They would be expected to present evidence of a commitment to research activity by past performance or projected plans in the immediate future. A much more detailed description of past activities and anticipated future involvement in research will be required of all applicants by providing more information, in advance of the institute and greater attention could be given to providing more to the specific needs of each participant.

Class size was no problem this year as the program was organized. It is expected that the above criteria will provide sufficient homogeneity among trainees to alleviate future problems.

Commuting was a definite problem. It interfered with trainee interaction, availability for extra-institute programs, and full utilization of library and other instructional facilities. Furthermore, commuting trainees were unable to divorce themselves from home, community, and local school assignments. Trainees and staff of this institute agree that future institutes should be essentially residential programs. Willingness to reside on-campus would provide another index of commitment to such training.

The lateness of program approval had a significant influence in trainee applications. Lack of time for adequate publicity restricted the applicants to areas administered by "interested" superintendents. It is to be hoped that future

programs will attract interested trainees. While the regional nature of future programs should be retained, if the number of institutes is to be restricted, the size of the region will be significantly expanded.

e. Numerous modifications will be made in future programs. In general these changes are to be made to correct deficiencies experienced in the current program.

(1) The program will be shortened to six weeks to coincide with the regular summer school program. This will help insure maximum plant-operating efficiency and maximum trainee involvement.

(2) Dormitory space, working space in a new library, and classroom and office facilities will be committed at the time a new proposal is submitted. President Sponberg has agreed that this space will be reserved until a decision on the proposal has been made.

(3) The daily schedule will be modified to provide for maximum trainee involvement throughout the day. Two formal classes will be scheduled 8-9:30 A.M. and 1-2:30 P.M. each day. Trainees will have weekly scheduled appointments with their project adviser. Group work, library research, and consultant-led seminars will be scheduled 10-12 A.M. and/or 2:30-4:30 P.M. This should provide ample time and trainee-staff interaction and maximum time for study and writing.

2. Program Strengths

The primary strength of the program was its production of a genuine appreciation and understanding of the nature of research evidence. Reports from several sources indicate that trainees are enthusiastic to complete the research studies designed in the program. The proximity of the training staff to the home-setting of the trainees has led to numerous formal and informal requests for technical assistance. Administrators have indicated that trainees are more alert to educational problems.

The research design course and proposal development course were the most valuable to trainees. This was a new and enlightening experience which they perceived as directly related to their tasks. While additional work is needed in both statistics and measurement, it is believed that these experiences should be task oriented rather than theory oriented.

The special experiences of note were the visit to a computer facility and the introduction of interaction analysis. The computer experience provided an opportunity to learn of research data analysis and problem solution being efficiently handled by a machine. This minimized some of their fears relative to their personal competence in statistical computation and increased their willingness to tackle designs utilizing involved statistical manipulations. Interaction analysis stimulated a wide variety of hypotheses relative to teacher-student, counselor-counselee, and parent-child interaction. The awareness of such a technique appeared to stimulate considerable interest in other potential studies.

The program provided the staff with a much more realistic orientation to the possibilities for future training programs. We learned that more focus is needed on individual problems, more direct guidance is needed, that more homogeneity is desireable, and that minimal competence and careful selection are essential. Adequate lead-time for publicity, briefing of administrators, and selection of applicants appears to be most significant to insure maximum benefit from such a program.

3. Program Weaknesses

As may be inferred from the previous statements, most of the difficulties encountered could have been avoided had the approval of the institute been obtained at an earlier date. However, weaknesses of considerable magnitude were in evidence.

a. Trainees were obtained from among those people who had not made summer plans by early May. This provided definite limitations on both the quality and number of applicants. Inadequate time for careful screening of applicants and briefing of administrators caused some people to be recommended and selected for the program who were not prepared to obtain maximum benefit.

b. Classroom facilities had to be developed from cafeteria space in one of the residence halls. This was not a desireable situation, but was the only space available on such late notice.

c. A very strong staff member, included in the original proposal, accepted an assignment at Cornell University because of the uncertainty of the institute assignment. While he was replaced by a well-qualified staff person, a change in teaching assignments was necessitated.

d. Library facilities and materials were not completely satisfactory. The delay in completing a new library and lack of time to set up an adequate institute library facility was a problem of some concern.

e. The only administrative difficulty - a combination of U.S.O.E. and local administrative accounting interpretation - stemmed from a statement in the Policies, Procedures and Special Conditions etc. relative to paying for "meals". The local interpretation, reinforced by Washington, was that even the meals for Consultants could not be paid from institute funds. The Director paid for such meals as the host of the consultant, but could not be reimbursed from institute funds. This seems like an unreasonable regulation, since per diem expenses are allowable. This is not in keeping with practices of N.S.F., Peace Corps, etc. and caused confusion and embarrassment for the Director.

4. Evaluation

The program was considered a success by both participants and staff in terms of work completed and objectives attained. At least half of the research projects designed by the trainees can make significant contributions to education in general and their school systems in particular. They voted unanimously to hold a weekend conference this spring to report on their progress and problems.

While my personal aspirations for the Institute were not completely realized, I believe that significant progress was made. Progress by trainees is evidenced in their accomplishments and their evaluations. The fact that thirty-six of thirty-seven trainees completed the program was most encouraging. Progress by staff is evidenced in their eagerness to continue this work and to prepare a better program for another year. Members of the State Department of Education also indicated satisfaction by encouraging the director to prepare an advanced training program for the State Department in addition to another proposal for U.S.O.E.

Trainee evaluations of the program were obtained via both structured and unstructured devices. Anonymity of trainees was maintained in every evaluation.

A rating form was designed for the trainees to indicate their pre and post institute competencies in terms of the specific objectives of the institute. On this five step rating scale the average gain was over two steps and significant at the one per cent level of confidence. The greatest gains were obtained in

areas of research design and methodology, evaluation techniques, and interest in research.

A questionnaire was also administered. This indicated that eleven per cent now feel competent to design a new study without help, seventy-seven per cent feel competent to provide with some consultation, and twelve per cent feel incompetent. Thirty-four of the trainees intend to continue their research training and eight wish to obtain advanced degrees and a full-time assignment in research. Trainees expressed a feeling that the standards of the staff ranged from high to very high. They recommended that future institutes provide more time for individual and small-group work, more resource people, and more field trips. They further recommend more selectivity in accepting trainees for future institutes.

The unstructured evaluations, while generally favorable, reflected a number of criticisms. Criticism centered primarily on physical plant and library facilities. Some criticism was directed toward the policy of not paying for dependents unless trainee and family are in residence. Other criticisms concern difficulties of commuting, parking, and lack of preparation for such a training program. While some of the criticisms were unavoidable, they alerted us to problems needing correction in future programs.

5. Most of the recommendations I can make have been implied in previous comments. Briefly stated they are:

   a. Approve programs that will be funded and notify the institution at least three months before the starting date.

   b. Prepare a separate set of directions for administering institutes that contains explicit statements relative to allowable expenditures for trainees, staff, consultants, equipment, library, etc. (See (a) under Program Trainees)

   c. Adopt a policy similar to N.S.F. relative to stipends and residence on campus.

In addition to the above, I would recommend:

   a. Increasing the number of summer institutes.

   b. Developing a program for school administrators to attend them in the manner, volume, and proper utilization of research personnel.

   c. Encouraging state departments of education to develop

certification standards for research personnel in public schools.

The current program of U.S.O.E. in Educational Research Training has made a very significant contribution to education. The administrators with whom I have had contact have been very cooperative and helpful. I hope that the program will continue to expand and that in the near future Eastern Michigan will also share the responsibility for training researchers at the specialist and doctoral levels in full-year programs.

Program Reports

1. Publicity

Newspaper releases were delayed from the time of approval of the project until announcement was made by Congressman Vivian. This made the announcement relatively ineffective and publication dates ranged from mid to late May.

The regional nature of the geographic area served in this proposal permitted personal contact as a primary source of recruitment.

a. In early May, personal letters announcing the program were sent to all superintendents, project directors, evaluators and researchers serving in the fourteen counties to be served. Descriptions of features and requests for applications were solicited.

b. Brochures and applications were sent to all persons expressing an interest.

c. Brochures were distributed to all members of the Michigan Education Research Council and by them to members of their respective organizations.

d. The Michigan Department of Education participated in the recruitment process, though none of the department people elected to apply.

e. The issuance of approval of the project permitted the announcement being placed in professional publications and newsletters as a recruiting device. Several post-selection announcements have been made.

Copies of the brochure and application forms are attached.

2. Application Summary

a. Approximate number of inquiries from prospective trainees (letter or conversation). 100+

b. Number of completed applications received. 48

c. Number of first rank applications (applicants who are well-qualified whether or not they were offered admission). 43

d. How many applicants were offered admission? 43

3. Trainee Summary

a. Number of trainees initially accepted in program. 40
Number of trainees enrolled at the beginning of program. 37
Number of trainees who completed program. 36

b. Categorization of trainees

(1) Number of trainees who principally are elementary or secondary public school teachers. 16

(2) Number of trainees who are principally local public school administrators or supervisors. 20

(3) Number of trainees from State education groups. 0

(4) Number of trainees from colleges or universities, junior colleges, research bureaus, etc. (Specify) 0

4. Program Director's Attendance

a. What was the number of instructional days for the program? 37

b. What was the per cent of days the director was present? 100%

5. Financial Summary

	Budgeted	Expended or Committed
a. Trainee Support		
(1) Stipends	$24,000	$21,150
(2) Dependency allowance	7,200	2,400
(3) Travel	200	211
b. Direct Costs		
(1) Personnel	$13,400	$12,628
(2) Supplies	250	118
(3) Equipment	0	0
(4) Travel	200	75
(5) Other	1,200	1,263
c. Indirect Costs		$ 3,028
TOTAL		$40,873